ABSTRACT

In 2005 a group of researchers and clinicians were funded (FRSQ/REPAR/CRIR) to investigate the assessment and treatment practices of occupational therapists (OT) and physical therapists (PT) treating children with cerebral palsy (CP) across Quebec. Using a cross-sectional survey design all eligible, consenting paediatric OTs and PTs were interviewed using a structured telephone interview in which they responded to questions on the “actual management of children with CP as elicited using cues from vignettes of typical children with CP. A major finding was that OT and PT interventions focused primarily on impairment and primary function (e.g. gait function and activities of daily living). Both professional groups gave little attention to interventions related to play/recreation/leisure. For example, while 91.9% of PTs and 67.1% of OTs reported using at least one standardized assessment, assessment was usually specific to impairment. We now want to conduct a knowledge translation study that is focused on the “monitoring change” phase of Graham’s Knowledge to Action Model. To our knowledge this type of research has never before been done in the area of CP. Specifically we want to know if treatment practices of OTs and PTs have changed in the past 7 years since we conducted the first study and if so, in what way?

Thus, the specific objectives include:

1. to describe the current practices (problem identification, assessments, treatment goals, interventions and referrals to other services) used by OTs and PTs in the management of school-aged children (6 and 7 year olds) with cerebral palsy;
2. to contrast management practices offered in 2005 versus 2012.
3. to identify factors related to the clinician, child and work environment associated with a focus on assessment and intervention that is considered “best practices” – for example specific to participation.

The present study is a multi-centered, nation-wide survey investigating OT and PT practices for school-aged children with CP in Canada (6 and 7 year olds). A structured online survey will be used to elicit information on typical OT and PT practices for children with CP using two case descriptions (vignettes) that have been created with funding from REPAR. This study’s results will identify change in clinician practices over the past years in their treatment of children with CP. This will allow the exploration of changes in practice – that is, “outcome
measurement” (as required by the new Edith Strauss competition guidelines) of the impact of all of our combined research on best practices for children with disabilities. We will for the first time ever, be able to share with clinicians information about how practices are changing.